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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

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### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Bernhardt, C. (2017). Governance, Statehood, and Space in 20th Century Political Struggles: An Introduction. *Historical Social Research*, 42(2), 199-217. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.42.2017.2.199-217>

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# Governance, Statehood, and Space in 20th Century Political Struggles. An Introduction

Christoph Bernhardt\*

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**Abstract:** »Governance, Staatlichkeit und Raum in politischen Konflikten des 20. Jahrhunderts. Eine Einführung«. The article explores the potential of the concepts of governance and scaling for the analysis of the spatial dimensions of 20th century political struggles. Selected questions from three strands of cross-disciplinary research – scales of political agency as discussed by critical geographers, patterns of Multilevel Governance (MLG) as analysed by political scientists, and conflicts in various political regimes of the 20th century as studied by historians – are addressed. The article starts by briefly examining some core concepts in these three fields and discusses some recent trends in debates on spatial theory as discussed by the historical disciplines. The following sections of the article address scalar strategies and governance in the authoritarian states of National Socialism and the socialist system of the GDR, governance problems of federalism in Western countries, key aspects of the "age of planning" in the middle of the 20th century and problems of global environmental governance. Finally, questions of knowledge formation in the field of European integration are discussed. In the conclusion some main results of the Forum are highlighted and an agenda for further historical research on problems of governance and scaling is given.

**Keywords:** Governance, scaling, political history, environmental governance, planning.

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## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This HSR Forum discusses spatial dimensions in 20th century political struggles along selected questions taken from three strands of research. These questions address 1) scales of political agency as discussed by critical geographers (Wissen 2008; Belina 2013), 2) interactions of political actors in contexts of

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<sup>1</sup> The author wants to warmly thank Jay Rowell, Dieter Schott, and Clemens Zimmermann for their helpful comments.

Multilevel Governance (MLG) as analysed by political scientists (Schuppert and Zürn 2008; Benz 2009) and 3) conflicts in different political regimes of the 20th century as studied with approaches of political mobilisation and other concepts by historians (Werner 2013).

The articles explore the potential of these questions for historical research in a double perspective: On the one hand, they might inspire historians to look for specific scalar strategies of actors who intentionally passed institutional and spatial levels and hierarchies to gain power (Swyngedouw 1997, 41) in past struggles, for example in the field of federalism in Germany. On the other hand some insights of recent historical research, like the thesis of a “new statehood” in German National Socialism (Hachtmann 2007), could add new impulses to the general debate on MLG and scalar practices in the political and geographical sciences.

In a general and preliminary approach the concept of Governance can be defined as a specific approach to studying political processes, in which the state, the market, and social networks or communities are perceived as institutional mechanisms which actors use in flexible ways (Benz 2004, 20). Special interest is given to interactions between representatives of the state and the civil society and to “the orders of cooperation between public and private agency” (Schuppert 2008, 20). MLG can be regarded as a subfield of Governance analysis which in the last decades strongly developed in the context of the European integration (Benz 2009; Knoth and Kohler-Koch 2000; Benz 2004, 124). The approach essentially deals with the ways in which decisions in multi-layered complex political systems are made from the local up to the supranational level and gives special attention to interactions, competences, strategies, and conflicts between actors involved (Mayntz 2008, 52). Phenomena addressed by research on MLG are only partly new, as Benz has underlined by referring to studies on federalism (Benz 2004, 127).

“Politics of scale” (Wissen 2008) as discussed by geographers at first sight seem to deal with similar questions from a perspective of the production of space. But studies in this field critically reflect existing administrative structures and do not consider them as the key object of analysis. In contrast, “scaling”-strategies of actors like global enterprises or NGOs which act across vertical administrative hierarchies and try to accumulate power in or outside formal institutions are primarily addressed (Belina 2008). So for example Mayer has analysed multi-scalar practices of urban social movements which primarily act on a local but also sometimes deploy strategies on a transnational scale (Mayer 2008). It must be said that the debate on scalar practices up to now has given priority to theoretical discussions which are still going on (Latham and McCormack 2010; Jessop, Brenner and Jones 2008) while empirical research seems to be less developed.

This HSR Forum also takes up and contributes to an ongoing debate on space-time practices, which in recent issues of this journal was promoted by Sebastian Dorsch, Susanne Rau, and others (Dorsch and Rau 2013; Rau 2013). As a point of departure this introduction will start by discussing the state of spatial theory and the approach of Dorsch and Rau (2). Here different aspects of spatial theory as discussed by historians with special regard to the role of empirical analysis will be examined. We will then explore and demonstrate the main fields of research to which the articles of this HSR Forum contribute. We will begin with scalar strategies and governance in the authoritarian states of National Socialism and the socialist system of the GDR (3). They show specific features in contrast to Western democratic regimes and raise the question of socialist governance. In contrast federal structures in Western states like the German Federal Republic (4) and Italy (5) represent a classical field of studies on government and institutional change which provides rich empirical material for the study of scalar and governance dynamics. In the second third of the 20th century federalism and governance were marked by a strong belief in the power of planning that most political actors shared at a time of polarized ideological public debates (6). Global environmental governance is a political arena, which only emerged recently and in which scalar strategies and problems of multi-level governance are very present (7). This is also true for the dynamics of knowledge formation and statistical integration in the supranational system of the EU (8).

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## 2. Some Trends in the Study of Spatial Dimensions of History

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Criticism that the majority of studies in the historical sciences are marked by an ignorance towards the spatial dimensions of human agency (*Raumblindheit*) (Conrad 2002) and follow the idea of spaces as mere “containers” of social interaction is no longer valid. It had never been true for the French historians, especially of the “Annales school,” which throughout the 20th century have shown a strong sensitivity for spatial dimensions of history (Rau 2013; Bernhardt 2016, 23-4). Since about two decades the traditional approaches are increasingly replaced by concepts of “relational” spaces which are constituted by social constructions and cultural frames of references instead of physical or administrative features. Pioneering figures in the disciplines of philosophy, geography, and sociology like Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault (Rau 2013), Martina Löw (2001), and Bruno Werlen (2007) paved the way for the “constructivist” concepts.

In the meantime a variety of approaches has been developed, like that of “spatial images” (*Raumbilder*) proposed by Detlev Ipsen (1997) and related

concepts in the field of the digital humanities.<sup>2</sup> Urban historiography has given growing attention to spatial images of cities in the context of marketing strategies and beyond (Biskup and Schalenberg 2008; Guckes 2011; Roth 2009) while historians of technology started to study the history of techno-scapes (Hard and Misa 2008). Cartography (Dipper and Schneider 2006) and Planning (Leendertz 2008; Etzemüller 2009) were also addressed by scholars who highlighted the relevance of these fields for spatial analysis.

But it must be said that apart from some subfields of historical research, such as urban history, discussions were limited to three main debates: Much attention was given to theoretical challenges of conceptualizing space, to spatial dimensions of everyday life, and to spatial practices of some groups of experts – like planners and cartographers – and their instruments. So spatial theory, social and cultural history and professional cultures became the privileged fields of research. Some theoretical and empirical attention was also given to the study of places (Escher and Petermann 2016; Marquart and Schreiber 2012). In contrast problems of institutional change and political transformation in the course of the 20th century stayed to some extent outside the “spatial turn,” apart from some explorations in the growing field of global history (Osterhammel 2009).

It was only recently that the studies of Dorsch, Rau, and others addressed scales of economic agency and struggles in urban and regional contexts as well as problems of institutional interaction and spatial transformation with a focus on early modern societies. Dorsch highlighted temporal dynamics in the production of space and insisted that “time practices” and “the production of time” have to be connected to spatial analysis (Dorsch 2013, 14-5). The HSR Special Issue “Space/Time practices” presented a related research programme and its results (Dorsch and Rau 2013). Rau showed for 17th century Lyon complex institutional and spatial arrangements between different actors, such as urban citizens, royal and ecclesiastical representatives. The roles of regional authorities like archbishops and governors and their informal networks with the municipal government are telling examples of complex socio-spatial arrangements in the early modern period (Rau 2014, 188-90). Stahl presented a very different case from West-Berlin in the 1960s: Here the West-Berlin government (*Senat*) was confronted with staunch citizen protests against aircraft noise and had to develop sophisticated concepts of governance in cooperating with the allied military administration – so local governance became directly connected to foreign policies (Stahl 2013, 240-2). These two cases might indicate the large

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<sup>2</sup> So for example the „Digital Atlas of political-spatial images in Eastern Europe in the 20th century“. See <<https://www.herder-institut.de/forschung-projekte/abgeschlossene-projekte/digitaler-atlas-politischer-raumbilder-zu-ostmitteleuropa-im-20-jahrhundert.html>> (Accessed August 11, 2016).

variety of governance problems in history which show complex institutional arrangements and struggles, implicating different scales of regulation and negotiation from the very local to the international scale.

As a preliminary result of this brief survey on the three strands of literature we have to state that each of them shows specific blind spots in regard to the spatial dimension of governance in history. Geographers and political scientists who developed sophisticated concepts of spatial and scalar dimensions of governance mostly did not include historical cases (except for rare exemptions like Swyngedouw 2015 and Schuppert 2014). As a consequence their theories and empirical research are to a large extent based on the study of recent Western capitalist societies, neglect variations of governance and scalar strategies in totalitarian and other political systems in history and in fact cover a limited number of selected political regimes. In contrast historians have not included the systematic approaches of geographers and political scientists in their studies and overlooked spatial dimensions and scalar strategies in political struggles; at least they missed the theoretical offers of and the dialogue with the social sciences. A cross-fertilisation between the different disciplines and approaches as proposed here can provide new cases and theoretical challenges for the social sciences and motivate historians to critically reflect scalar strategies in political history and to contribute to an interdisciplinary debate.

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### 3. Variations of New Statehood and Re-Scaling in Totalitarian Regimes

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It is astonishing that until recently politics of scale or multilevel governance have rarely been discussed with regard to totalitarian regimes. In return specialists for these regimes have not used these approaches in their studies. But some of the new concepts to describe National Socialist statehood developed over the last years have identified striking cases of scalar policies and conflicts of governance. Some scholars have shown growing interest in the regional scale of the National Socialist regime, particularly in the context of research on the “national community” (*Volksgemeinschaft*) (Schmiechen-Ackermann 2010). Within this paradigm the dominant theses of a strong centralist state under the control of Hitler and his circle was replaced by the concept of strong interferences between top-down state policies and bottom-up activities of the people. In this context a closer look at the regional scale of the National Socialist political districts (*Gaue*) proved to be stimulating because scholars were thus able to identify and describe the dynamics of mass mobilisation that the regime successfully initiated (Werner 2013). Moreover the eminent role of spatial strategies for the ideology of the regime (Nolzen 2012; Jureit 2012) became apparent.

Two results of this strand of research seem to be specifically interesting in the light of multilevel governance studies. On the one hand scholars found out that regional and local actors had remarkable scopes of action which modified previous views of a strong centralist or a so-called “polycratic” regime (Gotto 2006). These scopes of action not only provided some – even if often limited – chances to escape from the strong control of dictatorship but at the same time triggered a radical mobilisation from below. Urban and regional authorities looked for solutions to local problems and often decided autonomously to launch racist or anti-Semitic campaigns of prosecution against their victims (Kuller 2013).

Moreover the steady transformation of traditional administration created new and flexible structures of mobilisation, which Hachtmann has called the “new statehood” of National Socialism (Hachtmann 2007). With the help of these structures the regime was able to use the ambitions and energy of subaltern actors to mobilise new support for its policies even if it did not necessarily delegate additional formal competences to regional actors (Werner 2012). But the key question of power structures even in large projects of the regime was no longer decided along traditional administrative hierarchies. In contrast smart local actors could accumulate competences and influence which they never could have achieved under formal federal legislation.

*Thomas Schaarschmidt’s* article (2017, in this HSR Forum) shows in detail how these dynamics were mobilised. In a first step the Nazi regime organized a break-through to totalitarian centralism by eliminating the federal order in Germany and establishing a complex and overlapping system of competing authorities of party and state on the regional level. As an effect of manifold diverging powers between conflicting administrative bodies, para-military organizations like SA and SS, and territorial asymmetries, problems of coordination of multilevel governance accumulated and conflicts on competences escalated. The Nazi system might be regarded as one of the regimes in history that show most clearly how changes in the scalar balances of power indicate the character of a political system and the dynamic of its transformation. Along the interactions between bottom-up and top-down initiatives to expropriate and discriminate Jews, Schaarschmidt demonstrates the complexity and variation of policies in this field. The rapid compulsory fusion of civic cultural organisations resulted in large-scale state-controlled associations, e.g. in Saxonia, in which unexpected niches of cultural life emerged where totalitarian control was less strong. The emergence of new patterns of totalitarian administration on the regional scale during the war reflects the extreme irregularity of this model of multilevel governance. Amongst the large variety of administrative structures and patterns of agency the fusion of local administration, Nazi party, and industry which was projected in Hamburg 1944 shows the creativity of the Nazi

bureaucracy to respond to military challenges with a cross-sectoral integration of regional actors.

The socialist system as constituted in East Germany showed after WW II despite major differences some similarities with regard to the role of regional authorities and the patterns of mass mobilisation. *Lena Kuhl* and *Oliver Werner* (2017, in this HSR Forum) underline, that here, too, local “room-for-manoeuvre“ were larger than the centralist character of the regime seems to indicate. In a context of a chronic shortage of resources central authorities desperately tried to mobilize hidden local resources. As a result local actors had to be given some informal competences as the regime depended to a certain extent on their support.

As to strategies of Multilevel Governance the East German regime developed sophisticated concepts of vertical consultation (*Komplexberatungen*) in which the needs and obligations of the regions were negotiated. Such semi-informal strategies can be interpreted as specific socialist modes of governance. Moreover, the GDR deployed manifold spatial strategies, for example in the field of regional economy and infrastructural policies by which the regime tried to modify the socio-economic structures and impose a new territorial order that was dominated by heavy industries and proletarian culture (Bernhardt 2017). In the context of strong rivalries and conflicts between regional authorities the campaign “districts build” (*Bezirke bauen*) which was launched in the 1970s forced district administrations to transfer resources to the capital city of Berlin. As a result socio-spatial disparities and resentment against the socialist nomenclature and the capital city rapidly increased (Werner 2017).

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#### 4. Federalism and Problems of Governance in History

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Amongst the broad variety of forms of governance in history *federalism* is certainly one of the most important ones. In a historical perspective the “Federalist papers” of the founding fathers of the USA in the late 18th century and the emergence of the German national state since the middle of the 19th century were two milestones in the emergence of modern federalism (Hausteiner 2015, 1-2). A key issue of territorial policies in federal systems since the late 19th century has been the strategy to mitigate socio-spatial inequalities with the help of public subsidies. From Bismarck’s intervention against regional disparities in Prussia with the help of subsidies for railway lines (Wehler 1995, 677-8) through the policies of interregional financial compensation as followed by Weimar Republic governments (Krabbe 1989) up to the Territorial Agenda 2020 of the European Union (Kunzmann, Spiekermann, and Wegener 2015, 4) the reduction of regional disparities through public intervention in order to increase the state’s legitimation represents a key concept of 20th century gov-



ernance. Recent research on the history of social engineering in 20th century Europe has shown that policies of interregional equalization represented a core element of the modern welfare state in the different political systems of democratic, National Socialist, and socialist regimes (Etzemüller 2009).

Beyond a mere analysis of institutional checks and balances historical research inspired by concepts of governance will give special interest not only to key structures of representative democracy and public administration but also to federalism as a political battlefield on which state actors and organized interests of citizens interacted in many conflicting ways (Benz 2004, 22). This is especially true for times of political confrontation, administrative reform and transformation in which the reorganisation of a state is discussed. Consequently attempts to re-balance political power by administrative reform represent a key conflict in federal states like the US, Germany, or Italy which in fact are never definitively settled. The continuous changes that federal institutions and power relations underwent have been characterized by Benz and Broschek as “federal dynamics” (2013).

In a long-term perspective the history of Italy since its foundation as a national state in the 1860s which *Christian Jansen* presents in this HSR Forum can be regarded as a striking case for the heuristic value of a multilevel governance framework in historical analysis. The relation between regional authorities and national government was and still is a central political bone of contention in the Italian state. It also becomes clear how important regionalism was already in the process of nation building in Italy in the 19th century. The relevant legal rules of the constitution of 1997 and the following reform of the federal system express the eminent role of scalar strategies, multilevel governance and of financial issues in this field.

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## 5. Federal State Reform and Civil Society in Conflict

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Whereas Jansen deals with the classical issue of federalism as a fragile and contested institutional balance between the regional and the national state in a long-term perspective *Sabine Mecking* (2017, in this HSR Forum) discusses the tensions between the federal state government, local authorities, and the civil society using the prominent case of territorial reform in West Germany in the 1960s. Here a large variety of top-down and bottom-up political strategies, such as consultation of experts, legislation, questioning of county and municipal representatives, etc, can be observed.

Initiatives for territorial reforms are one of the most conflictual issues in regional politics bringing powerful social interests into play. Mecking shows how, in a context of a strong planning euphoria in the late 1960s, German federal authorities used strategies of re-scaling to trigger functional and territorial

reforms in order to achieve a more efficient public administration. Reorganising the balances between different political scales was also regarded as a means to stimulate economic growth and public services. Simultaneously, citizen mobilization for increased political participation represented another important driving force of rescaling.

Mecking demonstrates that the administrative reform heavily depended on cross-party coalitions. As such, a broad consensus on the level of the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia drove reform where as in the northern federal state of Schleswig-Holstein major conflicts arose between the majority and the minority in the state parliament.

Mecking analyses the broad variety of local protests which often developed populist arguments but also points to the importance of other scales of action as these local movements were encouraged by leading national politicians and built regional and national coalitions. Obviously the political power and spirit of the citizens groups was also fuelled by and depended on the invention of new types of public demonstrations and plebiscites. Local protests can become, if they succeed to develop a critical momentum in the public debate, points of reference for general political disputes, as Mecking shows. In the debates on administrative reforms Mecking identifies an interesting tension and dynamic in which intentional re-scaling by top-down legal territorial reform and collective mobilisation of citizens interact.

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## 6. The Age of Planning

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In the course of the 20th century planning became a cross-sectoral political field in which spatial strategies of different actors, like public authorities, large enterprises, and civil society stimulated heated controversies across the different administrative levels of political systems (Leendertz 2008). Especially large technical infrastructures like motorways or airports which shaped 20th century Fordist societies were and still are nodes of technology and governance (van Laak 1999). But planning was and is much more than a mere technocratic strategy of transforming physical space. For several decades it represented a key paradigm of political culture in Europe and beyond (van Laak 2010). In fact the mission of planning ideology was to regulate societies by designing the future with the help of large scale projects, social and territorial reform and large financial investment. Actors on the regional and the local scale were – or believed that they were – often marginalized in the implementation of large scale programmes. As a consequence, critical interventions and social movements emerged, which contested the established forms of governance and called for reforms in favour of citizens and citizen groups.

Historiography has given special attention to the “planning euphoria,” which in the 1950s and 1960s infected political actors and experts in socialist as well as in capitalist countries. In their vast majority they shared a strong belief in the problem-solving capacities of prospective large-scale planning for economy and society (Steiner 2008). “Society as a whole” should become the object of planning (Metzler and van Laak 2006). State socialism had propagated this ideology since its origins and connected it closely to strategies of political hegemony and legitimation as well as social transformation. In the 1960s planning in the German Federal Republic (FRG) was increasingly underpinned by complex models of forecast and regulation and became a key instrument of social policy and governance (Frese 2003; Metzler 2005). At the same time on the basis of the socialist planning ideology the GDR regime developed a strong vision of “techno-scientific progress” (*wissenschaftlich-technischer Fortschritt*) and control over the future (Caldwell 2008; Sabrow 2004).

Sophisticated social planning elaborated by experts was developed towards the concept of giving a comprehensive order to modernity (*Ordnung der Moderne*) (Kuchenbuch 2010; Gosewinkel 2008) in which socio-spatial equalization played a key role, as Leendertz has shown (2008). These insights in the fields of socio-spatial planning, social engineering (Etztemüller 2010), and the order of modernity are of eminent relevance for research at the crossroads of spatial theory and governance in the 20th century.

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## 7. Scales of the Environment

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Environmental issues which since the middle of the 20th century rapidly won attention of political activists, governments, and scholars are often very closely connected to spatial and scalar problems. Consequently the historiographic sub-discipline of environmental history has connected research on regional and short term processes of environmental degradation and governance to long-term supra-regional and global studies (Siemann and Freitag 2003) and given special attention to transnational perspectives (Arndt 2012; Radkau 2011; Hughes 2009). “Global issues ask for globally coordinated governance,” as Michael Zürn, one of the leading scholars in the field of global governance, sums up (2013, 6).

The relevance of scalar strategies and scalar scientific approaches in environmental history have been particularly well demonstrated by Moss and Newig on the problems of governance of water resources. They underlined the “multiplicity of challenges related to spatial scales and multiple levels of governance” in the field of water policies which result from various institutional problems, like the misfit of environmentally relevant scales – such as river basins – and administrative territories and levels (Moss and Newig 2010, 1).

The introduction of the EU Water Framework directive (WFD) implemented in 2000 is a striking example for the challenges water resources pose for multi-level Governance and the deployment of scalar strategies by stakeholders. The misfit between fundamental hydrological dynamics and spatial dimensions of water catchment areas and river basins on the one hand with existing administrative structures on the other challenges governments all over the world. This is especially true for water bodies that extend across national borders (Moss 2012).

Moreover, in times in which environmental problems such as climate change and carbon dioxide emissions have been constructed as a global problem they seriously challenge established administrative systems, like the national state. As a consequence institutional arrangements in environmental policies often meet, as Young (2005) has shown in the Science Plan of the Institutional Dimensions of the Global Environmental Change project from 1995, with problems of fit, interplay, and scale of existing administrative structures.

The activities and networks of environmental movements reflect in many ways scalar dimensions of the problems that the citizen groups address. In the formative years of the environmental movement during the first decades of the 20th century *regional* problems played a dominant role and it was only after 1945 that transnational activities and cooperation rapidly progressed. A prominent case was transboundary cooperation of environmental groups and other actors (like water works) in the fields of water pollution (Bernhardt 2016, 458-60) and nuclear power along the Rhine. Kirchhof and Meyer have shown in detail how the transnational dynamics of nuclear power transcended national boundaries in terms of radiation, circulation of knowledge, and commercial interests (2014, 166-7). Ecological communication and the media worked as powerful triggers and arenas of transnational interaction.

The rise of Greenpeace which started as a local action group and developed to a global enterprise is a prominent case of globalisation of environmental movements. *Frank Zelko* shows that beside state and supra-national organisations, NGOs like Greenpeace also developed multilevel organisational structures (Zelko 2017, in this HSR Forum). Within Greenpeace this was from the start a contentious process with strong collisions of interests and struggles over the character and goals of the organisation. The strategy of Greenpeace to irritate and contest established transnational legislation and politics mirrored and challenged national public administrations and modes of multilevel governance in the founding period of the 1970s. The complex institutional situation between Canadian and US authorities is a striking empirical example for this problem. The analysis of the voyages of the Greenpeace ship sheds light on the effects of territorial structures of NGOs and their governance as well as on the role of indigenous people in structures and processes of MLG. Moving beyond Greenpeace Zelko shows the parallels in the emergence of the similar organisations, like “Friends of the Earth.”

The special pathway from a local to a globally active group that Greenpeace has followed was obviously influenced by its decision to address maritime environmental and conservation issues and to develop forms of actions in which ships played a key role. Oceans counted, as Garrett Hardin underlined as early as in 1968 in his seminal article on “The tragedy of the commons,” amongst the natural resources that were by that time regarded as being highly endangered by excessive exploitation (Hardin 1968). At the same time oceans did not, in legal terms, belong to a single state but represented a kind of extraterritorial common. National states competed in struggles over the economic use of the ocean resources and over the representation in international conventions and organisations, like the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. As a result, for the national discourses in the FRG and in other countries, oceans represented “spaces of globality” in national public debates (Kehrt and Torma 2014, 316).

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## 8. Knowledge Formation as a Trigger for Rescaling in Supranational Contexts

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In the course of the mediatisation and scientification of the social and the political during the 20th century (Raphael 1996) state authorities and political parties as well as lobby groups like Greenpeace increasingly developed strategies of political labelling and campaigning in order to achieve their goals. Getting involved in processes of knowledge formation and participating in the development of scientific concepts became important in struggles for power. Consequently shifts and re-arrangements of scalar orders and structures of governance were connected to and often prepared by transformations of knowledge regimes. Böhme and others have argued that in the 1970s knowledge obtained a new status and relevance for societal development (Böhme et al. 1993). Lengwiler and Beck have discussed the rise of concepts of prevention in the field of social policies and health care as an example for the nexus between knowledge regimes and political change (Lengwiler and Beck 2008).

In the policies of convergence that the European Union follows in order to promote the integration of its member states knowledge policies like monitoring or the transfer of best practices play an important role, as Kern and Theobald argued for the fields of pension insurance and elderly care (Kern and Theobald 2004). Creating common knowledge like common standards, administrative procedures and statistical categories is of essential importance for reinforcing certain political actors and levels – like the EU in their ambitions to take over competences from the national states – as *Jay Rowell* demonstrates in his research on the statistical modelling of the category of disability (Rowell 2017, in this issue).

As he shows, classical instruments of knowledge policies like the reconstruction of categories, use of statistics, interventions in everyday vocabulary, and the formation of scientific knowledge contribute to the emergence of new types of European expertise and the rise of a new policy arena. As a result “a European scale of public action” and a “social and institutional space of actors alongside the European institutions” were established. Such dynamics are not completely new as parallels can be drawn from the literature on national state building which provides insights and methodological inspiration.

Rowell highlights the strong interconnections between political dynamics in various political arenas and on different scales, like the rise in the number of beneficiaries of social programmes in the national states in the 1980s as a trigger of budgetary problems in the 1990s alongside with the rise of European policies for legal harmonization and equal treatment for all Europeans. It is interesting to see that in the course of “Europeanization” certain key decisions, like the focusing of disability policies on problems of employment went hand in hand with the re-scaling towards the European level. The claim for comprehensive policies and a “global response to meet common challenges” provided argument for a large-scale and common European approach. The same could be demonstrated for the EU Water Framework directive that was mentioned above: There a specific concept of water management which prioritized the approach of river basins management instead of traditional administrative designs served as a strategic argument to achieve a Europeanization of water management (Moss 2012). Detailed analysis as undertaken by Rowell reveals the large variety of intra-administrative struggles over statistical data and new types of conflicts in the course of upscaling, such as an “internal battle of bureaucratic authority” between the Directorate General (DG) Employment and DG Ecfm. In such struggles policies were “reframed” (from “employment frame to discrimination frame”) and were accompanied by administrative reform, so the “disability unit” was moved from DG Employment to DG Justice.

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## 8. A Preliminary Conclusion

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The idea of this HSR Forum was to bring together questions of spatial dimensions of politics from three strands of research. Given the diversity of the political contexts and issues one might ask which more general insights from the historical cases analysed here could be drawn. In a broad sense many of the cases reveal the pre-history of contemporary forms of MLG and scaling on the basis of rich empirical evidence. In the National Socialist case the concept of a “new statehood” shows the specific patterns of mass mobilisation and scalar strategies of authorities in wartime. The simultaneous unleashing of several powerful and seemingly extralegal activities did not, as one might imagine,

undermine effective administration but created new and radical dynamics of authoritarian governance on multiple scales. In a similar but different way the closer look at key mechanisms of the socialist system in the GDR reveals patterns of socialist governance in the shadow of formal hierarchies. Regional actors developed sophisticated scalar strategies by using informal vertical and horizontal networks, which produced effects on formal consultations with central state authorities. These observations are a strong argument to apply the concepts of governance and scale to socialist systems.

The long term perspective on the Italian case revealed the *cyclic character* of discussions on certain problems of Multilevel Governance in history which obviously culminated in the periods of post-World War II, the 1970s, and the 1990s. Even if such debates on reforms were linked to particular configurations, like restructuration or stabilisation of the political system, strong initiatives to reinforce the power of regional authorities historically indicated repeated crises of legitimacy of the political system. The case of the administrative reform in West-Germany can be read as a striking example for the patterns and dynamics of governance in the heyday of planning euphoria. In a history of governance regimes that is still to be written, the rise of mediatisation and citizens' movements placed new constraints on projects of top-down reform.

The history of Greenpeace is certainly a paradigmatic case for the role of NGOs in the rise of Global Governance in the late 20th century. If studies on Multilevel Governance sometimes tend to focus on formal institutions and public actors, Greenpeace can be understood as an important actor in the construction of environmental issues as a global problem of governance. The analysis of the European Union case gives insights into the complex arrangements and struggles within the bureaucracy of a supranational confederation of national states. Whereas such a process is not principally new if we think of the German confederation in the 19th century the rise of the knowledge society set a new framework in the context of a strategy for European convergence which dominated the 1990s and 2000s. The creation of new spaces of knowledge production and institutional debate shown by Rowell implies and prepares shifts in the structures of power and governance from the national state level to the EU.

Beyond the heuristic gains obtained from cross-disciplinary fertilisation some challenges of interdisciplinary research on scalar dimensions in history processes remain. Amongst other problems the tension between narrative historical analysis and systematic approaches of political scientists obviously sets some limits to the application of concepts of MLG and related approaches in historical studies and to the adaption of this framework in neighbouring disciplines. But some historical cases of governance and scaling, if carefully examined in an interdisciplinary perspective may be of surprising relevance for the analysis of contemporary political and institutional phenomena.

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## Special References

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Spatial Dimensions of Governance in 20th Century Political Struggles

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